

"The Unconsidered Now. "

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"The Unconsidered Now. ." *The Annals of Iowa* 2 (1896), 401-402.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.2098>

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1st. A road from Burlington to the Missouri River, at or near the mouth of Platte.

2nd. A road from Davenport *via* Muscatine to Kanesville (Council Bluffs.)

3rd. A road from Dubuque to Fort Des Moines.

No other memorials will pass this winter, and the above may be regarded as the settled policy of the State. I will endeavor to have the memorials forwarded to you as soon as they shall be enrolled.

Yours truly, etc.,

JAMES W. GRIMES.

In view of the immense development of railroads in Iowa, this letter would indicate that the ambition of the people of the State at that day, in this direction, was very moderate. The principal object for which Mr. Grimes became a member of that legislature was to start a movement in behalf of building railroads, and in this he succeeded admirably. He introduced the memorial for a grant of land by Congress to aid in the construction of the Burlington and Missouri railroad, and without doubt was friendly to the other lines mentioned, which were endorsed by the legislature.

"THE UNCONSIDERED NOW."

The following article from the pen of Hon. S. M. Clark of the Keokuk *Gate City*, in a style at once clear and convincing, sets forth the idea which underlies the work of historical collecting, not only in this State, but everywhere else. We commend it to our readers as affording an excellent illustration of the efforts of the Historical Department of Iowa, the chief work of which is the preservation of the data for the history of the State and its people—those facts which, however much they may be "unconsidered now," will in future days be worth a thousand fold more than all they cost. It has been a con-

stant surprise to us to see how naturally people come to obtain facts from our collections, and it has been highly gratifying to be able to aid so many of them, notwithstanding the work is not yet four years old. But read what Mr. Clark says:

The late Judge Edward Johnstone was talking to us about how unconsciously people live history and take no account of it and throw its records into the waste basket and think nothing about it. After a while that which was such a commonplace present becomes the past and history, and you want the records of it and they are gone—thrown away as unconsidered trifles. Thus, he knew very well a man living in a neighboring town. He met him often and talked with him often and got letters from him sometimes and threw them away after reading. After a time that man was dead in a tragic way and his name was known to certain of his adherents and many other people over the world, for it was Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon religion, canonized now as a prophet in the thought of thousands of his co-religionists. Many times afterwards Judge Johnstone would have been glad to have written of his own personal knowledge of Joseph Smith and to have had his letters to show the manner of man the prophet was and how he wrote, yet the letters had been dissolved in the dust-heaps of long past years, because we seldom think now that the now can become history.

In the like manner that Judge Johnstone was speaking of, how we let history and biography escape us in an unconsidered way! In those palmy days of Keokuk in the fifties, when a canal for the commerce that never was, was being made by the state of Iowa along the Des Moines river; when the oak and elm thickets, and groves here where Black Hawk and Keokuk and their bands had lounged about in the Indian fashion had been cut down over night to make room for a palatial home and a street alongside of it of such deadly depth of yellow clay that sometimes an unwary lady who had ventured abroad had to be taken home on a dray as the only possible form of transportation; in those days of myth and memory there was a young man idling about his brother's job-printing office in Keokuk, setting types a little, making pretense of reading law a little, writing himself down as an "antiquarian" in the bran-new first directory the ambitious young city ever had, swapping yarns in a drawling way with the other fellows. Of course they paid no more attention to his yarns than to the other fellow's yarns, if so much. How could they know until they took up the *New York Herald* years afterwards and were put into a glow with the matchless fun of "The Innocents Abroad," that that drawling "Antiquarian" of the job office and the old Billings house was "Mark Twain?" And that the yarns and jokes he had drawled out to them would be worth \$100 a page after awhile, when written out as literature that stands well at the head of American letters in its way?

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